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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/26/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [OREP](#) [AM](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKEY: CODEL MURTHA DISCUSSES IRAQ, ARMENIA, AND  
IRAN WITH PRESIDENT GUL

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

Summary  
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11. (SBU) Turkish President Gul expressed great appreciation for the efforts of Rep. Murtha and other Codel members to prevent House passage of the Armenian genocide Resolution (AGR). He said the meeting between President Bush and PM Erdogan on November 5 had brought Turkey and the US to a "good place" on the PKK issue that will allow Turkey to help even more on broader Iraq issues. Gul recounted Turkish political and development assistance to Iraq and Afghanistan, and its role elsewhere in the region. Codel Murtha voiced US appreciation for Turkey's contributions and friendship, asked for more Turkish help in Iraq, and urged Turkey to engage with Armenia. End Summary.

Supporting Iraq  
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12. (SBU) Supporting Iraq. A well-briefed President Gul expressed warm appreciation for the efforts made by Rep. Murtha and the other Codel members to prevent a vote on the AGR in Congress, citing each member's contribution. Gul reported that, as a result of the November 5 meeting between President Bush and PM Erdogan, the U.S. and Turkey had reached a "good place" vis-a-vis PKK terrorism and the PKK is "panicked." The removal of the AGR irritant and effective action to end PKK terror will allow Turkey to be even more helpful on broader Iraq issues. Murtha said he had been assured while in Iraq that Iraqi Kurds were taking measures to prevent PKK attacks from northern Iraq.

13. (C) Murtha encouraged the GOT to help further in Iraq, especially by urging the Maliki government to do its share to promote stability and reconciliation, and to move forward energy, de-Baathification and other key legislation. Time is short, and the combined US commitment to Iraq and Afghanistan, at \$14 billion per month, will be hard to sustain. Gul replied that "your success is our success" in Iraq. He noted that the GOT had organized the November 3 Expanded Neighbors Ministerial in Istanbul and was pleased to see a decline in violence in Iraq. Turkey had worked hard to encourage Sunni leaders to participate in the political process. Turkey has provided training to Iraqi political

leaders and offered facilities for training of Iraqi security personnel. Turkey is also facilitating trade with Iraq and has lost a large number of truck drivers to terrorist attacks. The GOT is willing to open more border crossings with Iraq to reduce truck backlogs and expand trade, but Kurdish authorities in northern Iraq are blocking this in pursuit of their own narrow interests.

14. (C) Asked for his assessment of Maliki and the prospects in Iraq, Gul stated that Maliki does not yet have the powers of a prime minister. Iraqi Security Forces do not have sufficient capability and credibility. The Kurds are focused on their own agenda and not on the success of Iraq as a whole. Mistakes were made early on, including the removal of professional officers from the Iraqi military. The GOI has become too dependent on the US presence. Gul recommended that the U.S. should make clear to Iraq that it will not stay indefinitely, while encouraging Iraq to engage effectively with its neighbors.

#### Iran's Growing Influence

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15. (C) Responding to queries about Iran's role in the region, Gul stated that Iran's influence has grown as a result of the war in Iraq. He pointed out that Iraq's border is fully open to Iran, while Kurdish politics prevents the opening of additional crossings on the less accessible Turkey-Iraq border. Iran's politics are not transparent, the Shi'a there are highly politicized, and the Gulf countries are afraid. Arab leaders such as Saudi King Abdullah, Palestinian President Abbas, and Jordan's King Abdullah are coming to Turkey to show solidarity in the face of Shi'a resurgence. Gul stated that Turkey shares the Gulf states' concerns that

Iran's nuclear program could have grave consequences for Iran's neighbors.

#### Dealing with Armenia

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16. (C) Gul outlined Turkey's military contribution to ISAF as well as its humanitarian and reconstruction support to Afghanistan, including construction of hospitals and schools.

Rep Murtha replied that the US Congress appreciates Turkey's regional contributions. With respect to the AGR, he made clear Turkey's friends will continue efforts against passage, but urged engagement with Armenia as well. Gul agreed and recounted his participation at the November 21 groundbreaking ceremony in Georgia for the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railroad, where he stated publicly that the rail network could be open to Armenian participation as well one day. Turkey does not seek to exclude Armenia, Gul stated, noting that the Armenian flag flies over Istanbul, where the GOA has a permanent ambassador at the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) headquarters. Meanwhile, Turkey tolerates up to 70 thousand Armenians working illegally in Turkey and has taken other steps that have eased the country's isolation.

#### Turkey as Regional Mediator

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17. (C) Gul told Codel Murtha he would travel soon to Pakistan to meet with President Musharraf as well as opposition leaders. He will urge them to handle Pakistan's political crisis rationally. Citing Turkey's special relationship with Pakistan, Gul said Turkey had committed to working with Pakistan and Afghanistan on a regular basis, including brokering meetings every six months, to help bridge their differences. Gul reported on the visit of Presidents Abbas and Peres to Ankara and their unprecedented addresses to the Turkish parliament. Turkey also initiated the Ankara Forum to establish an industrial zone in the Palestinian territories with the aim of giving the Palestinians the prospect of economic progress.

18. (U) Codel Murtha did not have the opportunity to clear this cable.

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